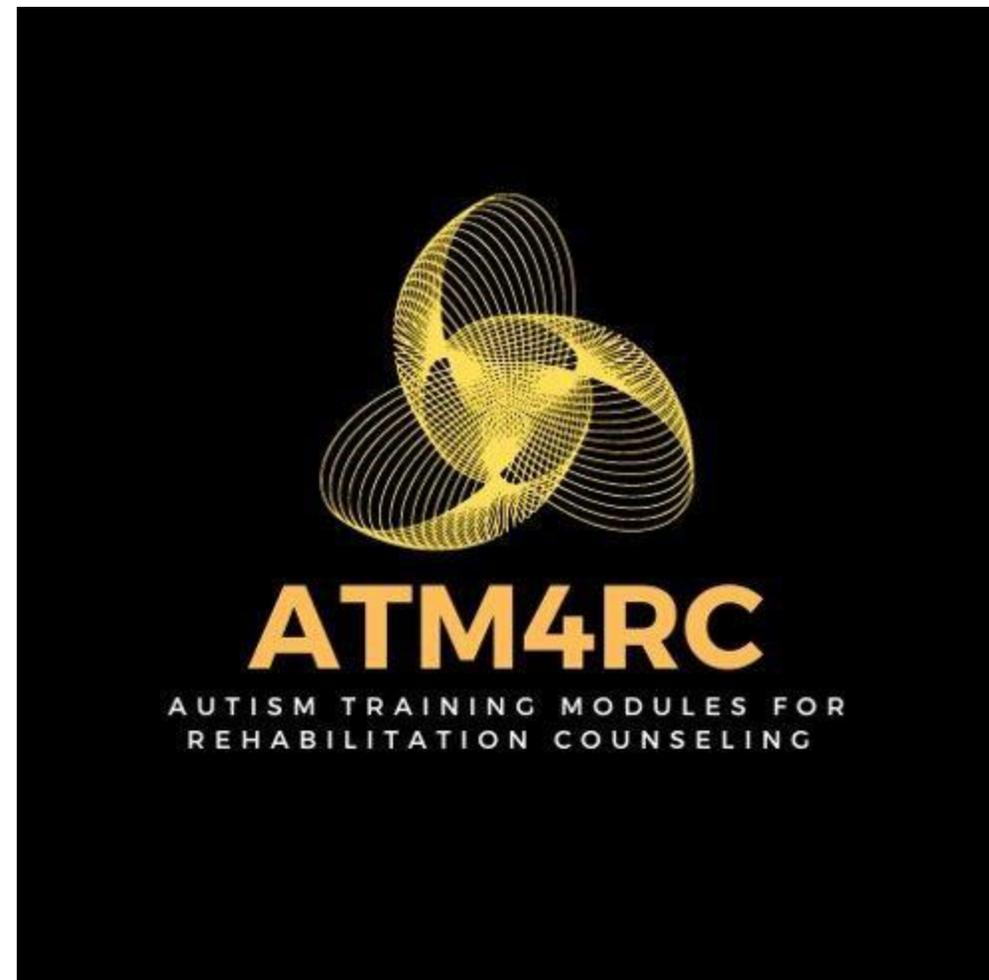


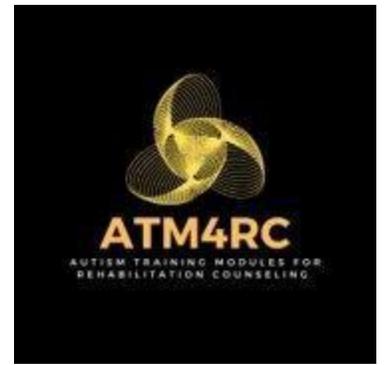
# Neurodiversity and Disability Rights Considerations

*The contents of this training document were developed under grant number CFDA 84.263, H263C190004, for Rehabilitation Training: Innovative Rehabilitation Training Program. from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.*

Dr. Jessica Stallings,  
ATR-BC, LMHC, LIMHP, LPC



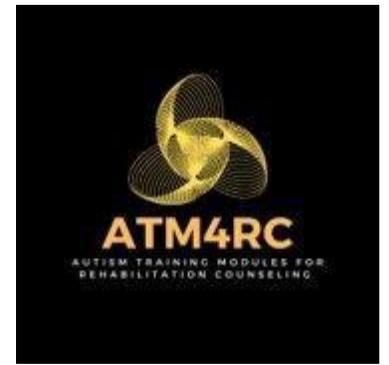
# Module Objectives



By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the role of Disability Rights movement in provision of services.
2. Define neurodiversity and its relationship to autism.
3. Identify ways disability rights and neurodiversity impact your work as a rehabilitation counselor.
4. Identify how respecting the autonomy and self determination of your clients may affect the application of Evidence Based Practices.

# A Note on Evidence Based Practices



- This module is not technically based on Evidence Based Practices; however, it provides important cultural context and client/person-centered information for provision of services.

# Brief History: Disability Rights Movement (1 of 4 )



- The League of the Physically Handicapped established in 1930s
  - Employment rights and public policy advocacy organization
  - Fought exclusionary practices of the Works Progress Administration (WPA)
    - WPA classified people with disabilities as “unemployable” despite F.D. Roosevelt intending the contrary
    - Led protests and sit-ins to address discrimination in WPA
      - Provided documentation of number of people with disabilities able to work
      - Led to Executive Order 7046 from FDR affirming rights under the WPA

(National Parks Service, n.d.)

# Brief History: Disability Rights Movement (2 of 4)



## Civil rights movement and its influence

Of the connection between the two movements, Disability Rights Michigan noted, “If it weren’t for the civil rights movement, the disability rights movement, and resulting civil rights protections for individuals with disabilities, would probably never have existed. The civil rights movement inspired individuals with disabilities to fight against segregation and for full inclusion under the law. Public institutions would often segregate or exclude people with disabilities from participation in public education, employment, or in using public services, such as public transportation. They took their cues for how to advocate for themselves from Black civil rights activists, many of whom had disabilities themselves” (Wright, 2023, para. 3).

# Brief History: Disability Rights Movement (3 of 4 )



- Movement grew in the 1960s and 1970s and used Civil Rights Movement Strategies such as sit-ins and other forms of civil disobedience, collective action and peaceful protest (Wright, 2023).
- Judy Huemann, review the following video <https://www.pbs.org/video/bbs-judy-heumann-1634850419/>, was perhaps the best known of the disability rights activists and was a leader of the 504 sit-in that led to meaningful action by the government on disability rights in the Rehabilitation Act of 1975
- For more info on the interplay of disability rights and racial justice, read <https://www.naacpldf.org/disability-rights-and-racial-justice/>

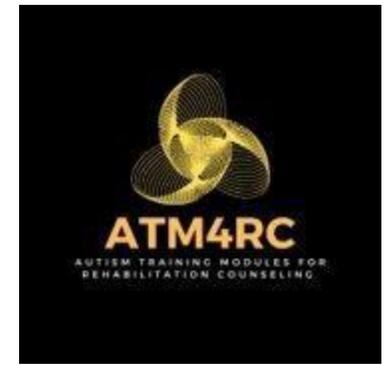
# Brief History: Disability Rights Movement(4 of 4)



- The above areas were highlighted due to their relevance to vocational rehabilitation, but the movement has been wide ranging and included other areas such as
  - Right to medical intervention or to decline intervention (Baby Doe cases)
  - Right to live in the community rather than an institution (Olmstead vs. L.C.)
  - Neurodiversity and autonomy-more specific focus on this will be addressed later in this presentation
- Perhaps most significantly activists have worked for “nothing about us without us” emphasizing the need for individuals with disabilities to be included in developing services, treatment models, writing laws, etc.

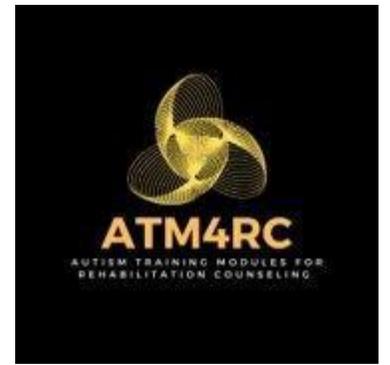
(Carmel, 2020)

# Brief History: U.S. Legislation (1 of 3)



- Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 2020)
  - Prohibits discrimination against disability status in programs run by the federal government
  - Section 504 also requires reasonable accommodations

# Brief History: U.S. Legislation (2 of 3)



- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, amended in 2008 (U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, n.d.)
  - Intended to expand upon Rehabilitation Act and make provision more enforceable.
  - Prohibits discrimination in employment and public service
  - Provides clarification on provision of accommodations across public and private settings
  - Addresses accessibility in telecommunications
  - And other miscellany such as insurance

# Brief History: U.S. Legislation (3 of 3)



- Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) of 1990
  - Replaced Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975
    - Prior to the EAH many children with disabilities were excluded from public education
  - Provides constitutional guarantee to “free and appropriate public education” for individuals with disabilities from birth including access to special education services.
- Operates alongside the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) later revised as No Child Left Behind (2002) and then Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) which focuses on overall quality and accessibility to education and using rigorous testing to evaluate student and school program success.

(U.S. Department of Education, 2024 & n.d. a & b)

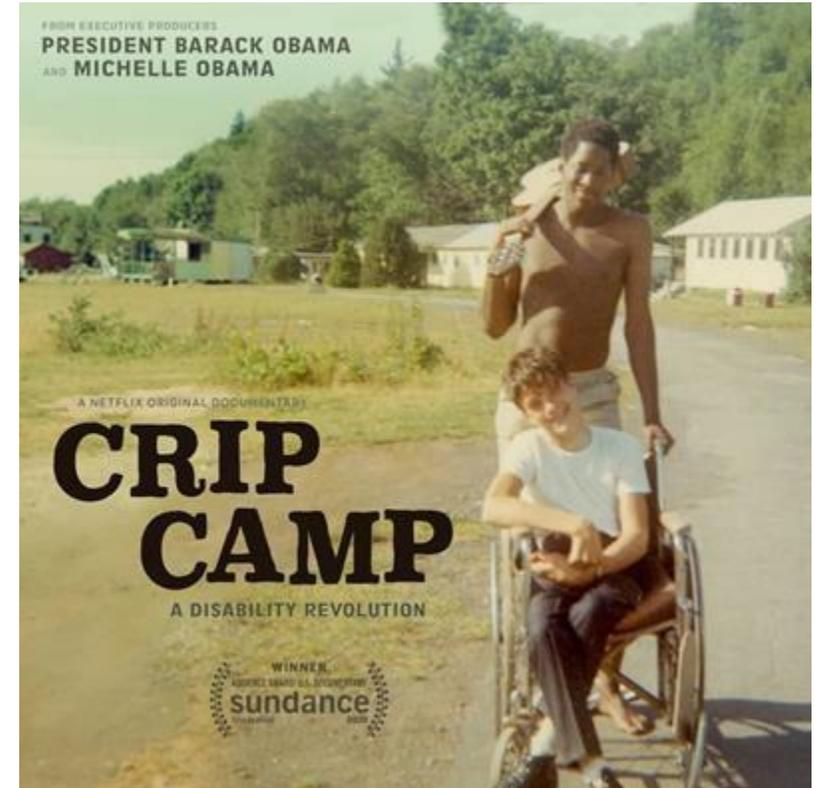
## Recommended viewing: Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution



- Crip Camp “[shares] with insight, clarity, humor, and beauty, the experiences of one group of disabled young people and their journey to activism and adulthood, it provides an opportunity for all to delve into the rich and complicated history of disability activism, culture, and history” (Crip camp curriculum, 2020). See for more information:

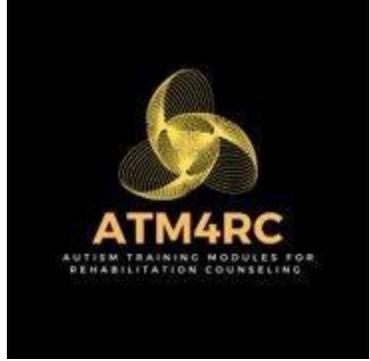
<https://cripcamp.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Welcome-How-To-Use-Lesson-Plans-accessible.pdf>

- Watch the documentary at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFS8Spwi0Z4> or on Netflix.



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# Neurodiversity Movement (slide 1 of 6)



- Autism Network International (Sinclair, 2005)
  - Began in the late 1980s/early 1990s
  - Encouraged self-advocacy and empowerment
  - Attempted to make autism conferences more “autism friendly” but met with opposition from non-autistic organizers
  - Created Autreats in the mid 1990s
    - Conference in retreat format organized for and by autistic people
    - Provided education to non-autistic family members related to the autistic experience
      - Read “Don’t Mourn for Us” (Sinclair, 2012) at <https://philosophy.ucsc.edu/SinclairDontMournForUs.pdf>
  - Created online presence and forums as dedicated autistic spaces
  - Echoed “nothing about us without us”

# Neurodiversity Movement (slide 2 of 6)



- Neurodiversity was coined by sociologist and autistic woman Judy Singer in her 1998 thesis
- Per Singer neurodiversity is: "A biological truism that refers to the limitless variability of human nervous systems on the planet, in which no two can ever be exactly alike due to the influence of environmental factors" (Singer, 2019)
- "Literally, the term refers to all beings with a nervous system, but since I coined it for a human rights advocacy purpose, I limited it to Homo Sapiens. The term Biodiversity covers the rest" (Singer, 2019).

# Neurodiversity Movement (slide 3 of 6)



- Proper uses of the term neurodiversity:
  - Applies to all human beings
  - For use in advocating or neurominorities (sometimes called neurodivergent)
    - Often includes individuals with Autism, ADHD, Tourettes, and learning disabilities
  - Refers to intersectionality of neurotypes and other factors
  - Does not inherently imply disability neurologically or otherwise
  - Is not a diagnosis
  - Does not have genetic implications

(Singer, 2016 & 2019)

# Neurodiversity Movement (slide 4 of 6)



- Initially Singer coined the term neurodiversity in relationship to autism
  - Autism is a different way of thinking but is not inherently problematic or wrong
  - Acknowledging inherent neurodiversity in humans helps us to make space for and accept different ways of thinking and work to adapt to each other

(Singer, 2016 and 2019)

# Neurodiversity Movement (slide 5 of 6)



“The Autistic Self Advocacy Network is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization run by and for autistic people. ASAN is a national grassroots disability rights organization for the autistic community. We fight for disability rights. We work to make sure autistic people are included in policy-making, so that laws and policies meet our community’s needs. We work to support all forms of self-advocacy and to change the way people think about autism. “  
(ASAN, n.d.a.)

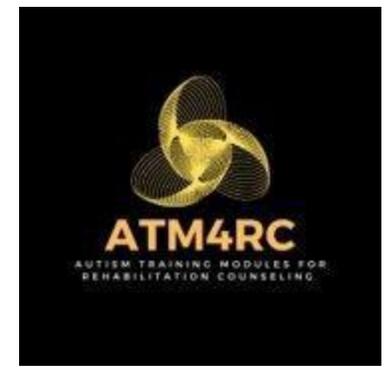
- For more about ASAN see <https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/>

# Neurodiversity Movement (slide 6 of 6)



- Person First v. Identity First language
  - Person first language began with the AIDS crisis and was intended to recognize the person before the disease or diagnosis (e.g. Person with Autism) and was enshrined in the Americans with Disabilities Act in the 1990s (Wooldridge, 2023)
  - Many people physical and neuro-minorities reject this structure and instead prefer identity first (Autistic or Autistic person) as they see their divergence as integral to their identity (ASAN, n.d.b.; Wooldridge, 2023; Neurodiversity Hub, n.d.)
  - It is best to ask your clients what they prefer

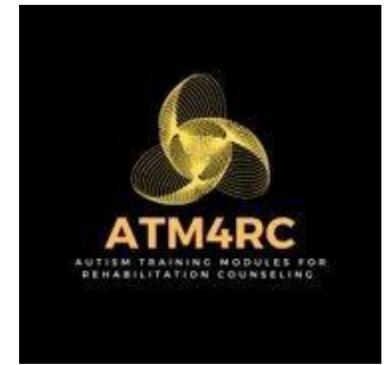
# Neurodiversity Positive Approaches in Human Services



- Providers sensitive to neurodivergence consider participants input on provision of service delivery and engage them in developing individualized services (ASAN, 2024)
- Strictly behavioral approaches can be harmful and encourage social masking and may result in trauma (ASAN, 2024)
- ASAN (2024) provides a tool kit and other resources for how to improve Behavioral Health Support Services, follow this link to see their resources

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/2024/05/beyond-coercion-and-institutionalization/>

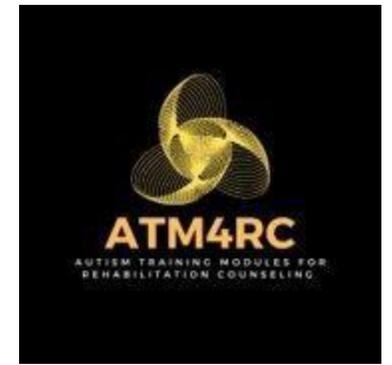
# Neurodiversity Positive Approaches in Human Services



- Ask client if they prefer identity first or person first language
- Ask what participants want want (see person-centered planning next slide)
  - don't prioritize family goals over participants
  - focus on self determination
- Consider a trauma informed care (TIC) approach, visit Project E3s archived webcasts exploring TIC in VR

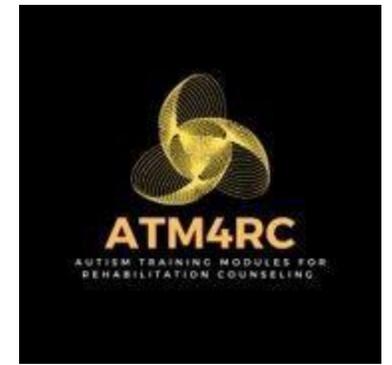
<https://projecte3.com/webcasts/key-aspects-trauma/>

# Person-Centered Planning



- Person Centered Planning has not yet met EBP threshold, it is a structured and easy way to include client feedback (Steibrenner et al, 2023)
- Considers from the client perspective their wellbeing, quality of life and vision for their future, for more information on general tenants see <https://shorturl.at/sEA2k>
- Person Centered Planning Webinar – see <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sP8nq6VE1EbHMRsggDyrX7FV3AqLwlMj/view>

# Person-Centered Planning (2 of 2)



- Jordan and Donovan et al (2002) provide a career/job focused person-centered plan format and case studies here <https://shorturl.at/atbwE>
- Herrera (2020) provides a fillable and comprehensive Person-Centered Plan format see <https://www.ecf.net/site/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Person-Centered-Workbook-Fillable.pdf>

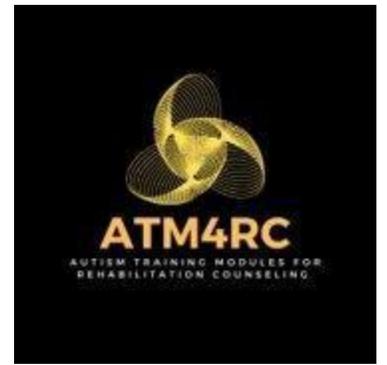
# Person Centered Plan Practice



## Directions:

1. Create a Person-Centered Plan for yourself- you may chose to use and example format provided above or create your own
2. In Creating this plan are there things your notice that are particularly important for you?
3. How does your own experience of creating a plan impact how you might create a plan with a client in the future?

# Where Should I Work?



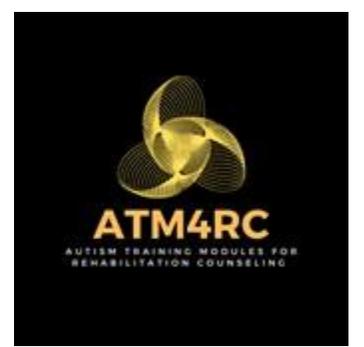
- Irene C, an adult with autism and ADHD and self empowerment coach, provides her perspective on job searching and employment for autistic persons in the following video: Where should I work?
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkz5r4atLUw>

# Autism from the Inside



- As providers we must consider our clients input and preferences and follow their lead
- See this short documentary told from one autistic, Jordan Kamnitzner's perspective:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDXo83OtzgE>

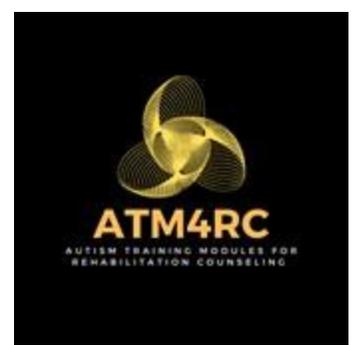
# Person Centered Plan Practice # 2



## Directions:

1. Create a Person-Centered Plan (PCP) for Jordan Kamnitzner (featured in *Autism from the Inside*) based on what information is provided in the documentary
2. Are there pieces missing? Where do you need more information
3. Consider what Irene C. provided in *Where should I work?* Are there other areas that you feel you need to add to your PCP based on her experience and recommendations?

# References (1 of 11)

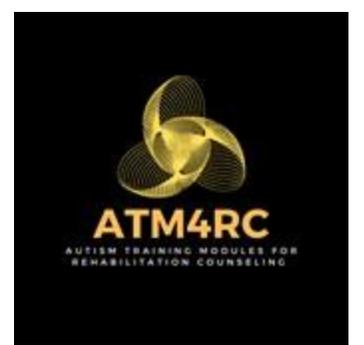


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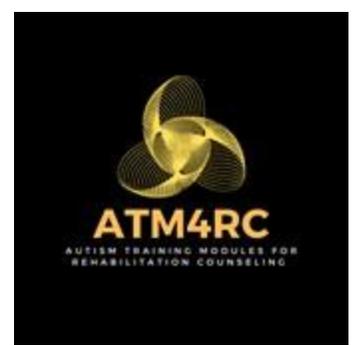


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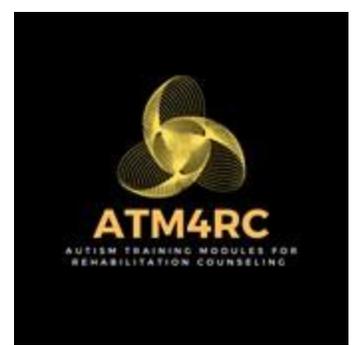
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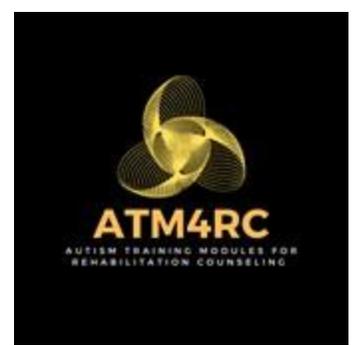
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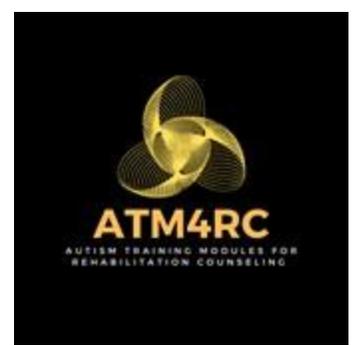


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